

Rochester, MN - Today, U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Congressman Tim Walz visited the IBEW Local 343 Wind Training Facility in Rochester, Minnesota to promote the benefits of a clean energy future for southern Minnesota's economy. At the facility, Chu and Walz met with municipal and non-profit cooperative energy providers and took part in demonstrations of three home-grown, cutting-edge renewable energy projects. [Dr. Steven Chu](#)

is a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics and a cabinet level official in the Obama Administration.

"The projects on display today represent the future of our economy in southern Minnesota," said Representative Tim Walz. "We're here today to see first hand the promise of home-grown, locally-owned clean energy technology. These and other innovative initiatives have the potential to provide southern Minnesotans with a reliable source of local clean energy to power our cars and heat our homes and offices. This can help us spend less on our electric bills and at the gas pump."

"Minnesota's innovators and entrepreneurs will be an important part of solving the energy problem," said Secretary Chu. "By moving to clean energy sources that are homegrown and homemade, we can create good jobs and grow the economy, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and prevent the worst effects of climate change."

The projects on display included a mobile self-contained ethanol plant, three vehicles designed by MSU-Mankato students to run solely on solar and electrical power, and the IBEW wind tower training facility, which teaches electrical workers to service turbines safely and rescue colleagues who might need help during the servicing of a turbine.

Al Stork, Business Manager for IBEW Local 343 said, “I want to thank Congressman Walz for inviting Secretary Chu to visit our Wind Training Center. The Secretary and Congressman’s work on renewable energy will be tremendously important to ensuring a stronger energy future that creates jobs here in southern Minnesota.”

Mark Gaalswyk, President and CEO of Easy Energy Systems said, “We were thrilled to have the opportunity to demonstrate to Secretary Chu the Modular Ethanol Production System which we believe solves the transportation ‘Achilles heel’ of cellulosic ethanol production and enables economical and efficient production of next generation cellulosic bio fuels. We hope to add 450 people to our plant in Welcome, MN as we ramp up production of these factory built units and to begin providing revenue generating opportunities for hundreds of rural cooperatives and entrepreneurs within the region and eventually, all of rural America.”

John Frey, Director of the Minnesota State University-Mankato Center for Automotive Research said, “The focus of our engineering program at MSU-Mankato is to engage students and the Secretary’s visit will definitely draw attention and translate into greater student and community involvement in the project. The future of renewable energy in Minnesota and across the country is reliant on engaging the young creative minds at our colleges in solving the challenges of transitioning to clean energy. This kind of attention combined with the funding Congressman Walz has appropriated for our project is the fuel that will spur our next big breakthrough.”

Walz said the three projects on display today were a handful of the many unique projects in progress across southern Minnesota which vary from lava heated ethanol plants in southwestern Minnesota to the geothermal HESS project in Rochester. Walz noted that the recently passed [American Clean Energy Security Act](#) is legislation that will drive research and

investment dollars towards these projects, expediting our transition to a clean energy economy.